

The Scottish Country Dance Teacher

TAS Newsletter February 2018
Newsletter of the Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)
Recognised as an RSCDS Teachers' Association

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

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From the Chairman

Dear Fellow Teachers

You know what people say when they retire – I've never been busier in my life! Well, I find myself in that position right now! During February and March I am busy editing Scottish Country Dancer, trying to fit in everything from all over the world which members send, trying not to disappoint anyone.

But there is a lot to be pleased about from a TAS point of view. We have had applications for grants from young people to attend Spring Fling in Glasgow and we have agreed a grant for a young dancer to attend the certificate course at Summer School, so our funds are being put to good use.

For the past few months the Working Group on Scottish Schools has been discussing what the issues are and how we can move forward so that the RSCDS can engage with the school system. There are some very hopeful discussions ongoing with a couple of our teacher training colleges. We will shortly be asking for submissions for the book of Festival dances. By the AGM I hope we may have some concrete developments to report.

We would be grateful if someone from each branch could send Jayne Riddet the information she asks for about children's classes below (see page 5).

I would like to encourage as many TAS members as possible to attend the Spring Workshop in Helensburgh. With Helen Russell, our current Society Chairman leading the morning session, this will give her the chance to see what TAS is all about.

Helensburgh Branch are holding a dance on the Friday evening prior to the workshop so it would be good if as many as possible can make that too. If my knee has recovered from the concrete floor of the Bells Sports Centre by then, I hope to be joining you!

Jimmie Hill

From the Editor

As this issue of the Newsletter goes to print the arrangements for our Spring workshop in Helensburgh have been finalised. You will find the details below. Roy Bain has kindly highlighted links to the Branch website so it should be easy for you to find the venues for both the social dance and the Workshop – and if you plan to stay in Helensburgh overnight you can search for accommodation using the links provided.

As usual, your Chairman has been busy digging up gems from the past; his contribution to this issue, 'Capering in Skye', had me nodding in agreement: it seems that the tendency to play music too fast is not a modern phenomenon, though of course the musicians who play for TAS and for our dances are well moderated – and none of us would dream of capering on the dance floor!

Muriel Bone has shared more information about the Spring Fringe which will run concurrently with the RSCDS Spring Fling in Glasgow from 20-22 April. The programme includes something for everyone. Well done Glasgow Branch for taking up the challenge!

TAS Dates for your diary:

The Spring workshop on Saturday, 28 April 2018, will take place in Helensburgh Parish Church.

For details of the programme see the flyer on page 3 of this Newsletter.

The AGM and Autumn Workshop will be held in Canon Hoban Hall, Broxburn EH52 5RJ on Saturday, 1 September 2018.

Social Dance, Friday, 27 April 2018

As discussed at our meeting in August, a social dance on Friday 27 April has been organised by the Helensburgh Branch of RSCDS. TAS members are warmly invited to attend. The dance will take place in Hermitage Academy at 7.30pm.

Music will be provided by Sandy Nixon.

Tickets, price £10, are available from Roy Bain roy.bain@btinternet.com

Anyone travelling by public transport to the Workshop who intends attending the dance should contact Roy who will arrange transport from your accommodation in Helensburgh to the dance. Likewise, if you have spare seats in your car and would be willing to provide transport please advise Roy who will try and match up dancers.

You will find information on the Helensburgh Branch website as follows:

<http://rscds-helensburgh.org.uk/dances/> - the Dance programme and minicrib. Also a location map for Hermitage Academy where there is plenty car parking.

Links to accommodation in the Helensburgh & Loch Lomond area can be found here:

<http://rscds-helensburgh.org.uk/branch-weekend/>

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Scottish Country Dance Teachers – A Date for your Diary!

TAS Spring Workshop - Saturday 28 April, 2018 - Helensburgh

Venue:	Helensburgh Parish Church (HPC) Colquhoun Street, Helensburgh G84 8UP	
Teachers:	Helen Russell	(RSCDS Chairman)
	Margie Stevenson	(Falkirk Branch)
Musician:	George Meikle	(Dumfries Branch)
Cost:	£4 for TAS members	£6 for non-members of TAS

- Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS) invites all Scottish Country Dance teachers to a workshop for teachers – no teaching qualifications required
- Dancing sessions mixed with opportunities for discussion – see below for details
- Hear about & contribute to the TAS Festival Book project

Workshop Programme:

10.30	Coffee / Tea and Registration	
11.00	Controlled Abandon	Helen Russell
13.00	Lunch – bring a packed lunch. Tea / Coffee provided	
13.45	'Opposites Attract' - Using 'pairs of dances' to emphasise teaching points	Margie Stevenson
14.45	Short Break	
15.00	'Festival Book' Project	'Working Group'
16.00	Finish	

If you would like to attend, please email the Treasurer, Judith Borup, j.borup@btinternet.com or phone 01738-842789 - ideally before April 22nd 2018

A map showing the Workshop location, Helensburgh Parish Church can be found here: <http://rscds-helensburgh.org.uk/classes/branch-adult/>.

The church is a 5-minute walk from Helensburgh Central Railway Station.

Drivers should note that parking at the Church is limited and the Wardens are active. Please leave time to find space outwith the "Limited Parking Zone" area.

New CDs

Three CDs have been recorded to accompany the book of dances devised by Bill Little (Willie Little) of Castle Douglas.

A different band has recorded each CD:

Volume 1 - James Coutts

Volume 2 - Scott Band

Volume 3 - Ian Muir

The books and CDs will be available to purchase at the TAS Spring Workshop in Helensburgh. You may buy the set of 3 CDs for £30 or individual CDs for £12 each.

Capering in Skye

One of the advantages of living in the Stockbridge area of Edinburgh has always been its second-hand bookshops. I remember this from my student days and the same is true today. Last week I picked up an original '*Skye Collection of the Best Reels and Strathspeys*' by Keith Norman Macdonald, published by Patersons, 27 George St, Edinburgh, price One Guinea, in MDCCCLXXVII (1887). In the preface the author writes:

"One word of caution may here be given against the tendency that exists at the present day to play this class of music a great deal too fast. Some are possessed of the idea that, in order to dance a Highland reel well, one must jump and shout like a maniac. It is only on very festive occasions that this sort of capering should be tolerated; in the beginning it was not so. The present writer well remembers the style of dancing of the older inhabitants of Skye thirty years ago (ie in the 1850s), and he is bound to say that it was then different from what one sees nowadays in a public ballroom. It was then always graceful and spirited, without one-tenth of the shouting that is now heard; and as to the time of the music, performers would have considered it an insult to be asked to play faster than the proper time. The strathspey, especially, should be played with grace and in measured time, giving the dancer an opportunity of moving his limbs gracefully. When this is not done, the thing degenerates into the railway speed of a clog dance in a pantomime, and to a stranger seems most ludicrous; while the music itself sounds as a regular jumble of the same note repeated in different strains. In recording these truths, it must be remembered, however, that no other music can touch the human heart with greater effect than a Scotch reel; and so long as human beings indulge in the innocent amusement of dancing, this class of music will always hold its own."

Jimmie Hill

Scottish Schools Working Group – request for information

As part of the Scottish Schools Working Group Jimmie Hill has asked me to identify, through our TAS membership, Branches that are currently offering children's classes.

I would be grateful if one TAS member from each Branch would please respond to the following questions:

Q. Does your branch offer children's dance classes?

A. YES NO

Q. How often do they meet?

A.

Q. How many children regularly attend?

A.

Q. How many children's classes do you offer?

A.

Q. Have the numbers remained steady, increased or declined in the past 5 years?

A.

Q. Do you know of any other independent SCD classes operating in your area?

A.

Please add any other relevant comments.

Responses should be sent to TAS Secretary, Jane Meikle (janemeikle@btinternet.com).

Thank you for participating and contributing towards this research work.

Jayne Riddet

Forthcoming events

Helensburgh & District 40th Branch Weekend:

6-8 April 2018

For information about this event please visit the Branch website: <http://rscds-helensburgh.org.uk/branch-weekend/>

Spring Fringe – Glasgow:

20-22 April 2018

Over the past few years a **Spring Fringe** has been organised over the same weekend as the RSCDS Spring Fling. The Fringe is for dancers **under 12** and **over 35 years of age!** The Fling is for 12 – 35 year olds.

There was a successful Fringe last year in Bonn, Germany. There have also been Fringe weekends in previous years in London and Edinburgh. Now Glasgow Branch has taken on the challenge and we are working hard on this. We are looking forward to welcoming dancers from near and far, as well as encouraging our local dancers to take part. We already have bookings from abroad and would love to see lots of TAS members and dancer friends taking part.

For more information please see the flyer below or visit the Fringe website.

Muriel Bone



INTERNATIONAL SPRING FRINGE GLASGOW



Friday 20th April 2018 - Sunday 22nd April 2018

A weekend of dancing activities for adults & children

Sat: Scottish Country Dancing: Teachers – Heather Cowan &
William Williamson

Sun: Quadrilles & Ceilidh Dances: Teacher - Peter Knapman
Children's class on Saturday

Welcome dance on Friday Buffet and Ball on Saturday

Take your pick or enjoy them all!

Our Fringe website gives information about accommodation

**Book online on our Fringe website or contact us for a booking
form**

Fringe website – <https://www.springfringe2018.com>

Email: fringeinglasgow@gmail.com Fringe Mobile: 07593 537133

See our Glasgow Branch Facebook page

**We want to make this a really special weekend
and would love you to join us!**